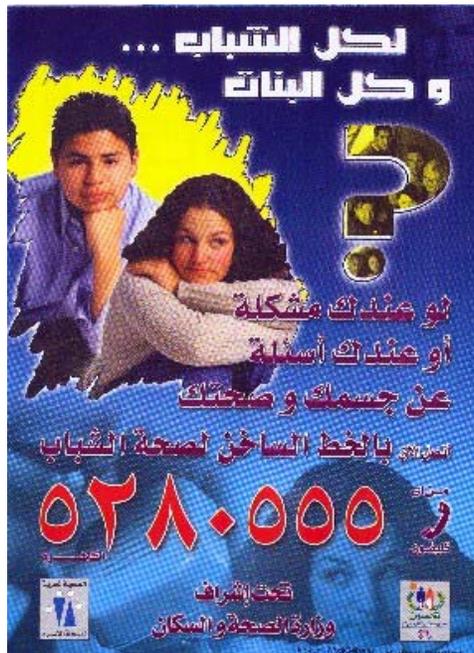


TAHSEEN Project
CATALYST Consortium



HOSTING THE YOUTH HOTLINE Progress Report



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Hosting the Youth Hotline

Introduction

The Egyptian Family Health Society (EFHS) was selected through a competitive bid to host and operate the youth health hotline. The purpose of the hotline is to better serve and guide youth at risk and provide them with the appropriate reproductive health counseling. The following report describes the activities and achievements of the hotline between October 1, 2004 and February 28, 2005.

Activities and Achievements

Site Selection and Adaptation

The EFHS decided to host the hotline in the same building as their office to facilitate its operation. The building is quiet and equipped with a kitchenette and restroom, which would be needed for the long hours put in by the hotline operators. The facility was rewired to permit the use of computers and telephone networks. A switchboard accommodating three external lines and eight extensions was installed along with telephones and headsets. Two computers and a printer were purchased and loaded with all relevant programs. The EFHS furnished and equipped the facility to accommodate an administrator, supervisor and two on-duty counselors.

Telephone Lines

Originally a 900 number was proposed for the hotline. After researching the options it was decided not to use a 900 number for the following reasons:

- revenue generated from the 900 number would not be substantial
- 900 numbers are considered commercial ventures and broadcast and mass media professionals consulted during the preliminary stage commented that they would not be able to announce news about the hotline if it were categorized as a commercial venture, and therefore
- the loss of free advertising would exceed the revenue generated from the 900 number calls

Three telephone lines were contracted and allocated one easy to remember number 528-0555. Phone lines were installed during November 2004.

Establishing Policies and Procedures

The role and responsibilities of the board of directors, project manager, administrator and the supervisor were defined. The hours of operation were set seven days a week between 10:00 am and 10:00 pm. Two shifts were set from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm. One female and one male counselor would be available on each shift to answer questions from female and male callers. A total of four female and four male counselors were hired to work on alternate days.

The data collection procedures were defined to ensure useful and practical monitoring. Data was to be recorded manually and electronically. A call register was developed, tested and printed. The system was set up to provide statistics on a daily and monthly formatting basis.

Marketing Plan

A preliminary meeting was organized on October 10, 2004. Forty-seven people representing the media, NGOs and the ministries of health and population, youth, and higher education attended the meeting.

The marketing committee studied the outcome of the preliminary meeting, discussed the marketing strategy and developed the marketing plan. (see Annex A)

Hiring of administrative, supervisory and counseling staff

- Mr. Mohamed Sami Roushdy, EFHS vice president was appointed project administrator
- Mrs. Basma Hashem was selected as project supervisor

EFHS and the TAHSEEN/CATALYST Project jointly carried out the hiring process for the counselor/operators. Positions were advertised in *Al Ahram* newspaper and on the notice board of the Medical Syndicate. The 32 short-listed applicants were invited for a personal interview that was conducted in over two days. Eight female physicians and three male counselors satisfied the selection criteria and were nominated.

The final selection of four female and three male counselors was made after nominees completed two phases of training and their performance, attitude and character were evaluated. A fourth male counselor was recruited. Having previously been trained in communication skills while working as a medical representative for a pharmaceutical company, his training was somewhat curtailed.

Counselor and Supervisor Training

- There were 2 training phases: operational training and technical training.
- Operational training was conducted from November 20-24, 2004 at the EFHS office in Maadi. Technical training was conducted at the Regional Center for Training at Ain Shams University from November 27- December 2, 2004.

Marketing Activities

The hotline was marketed through media activities, face-to-face communication and the distribution of promotional materials.

Media Activities

Media activities were initiated after the preliminary meeting on October 10, 2004 and reached a peak after the official opening on January 18, 2005. Members of the Society for Mass Media and other personal contacts provided no-fee media coverage. Announcement of the hotline in the media included the following articles and programs:

Television

- Channel 1 : *Hatha Al Masaa* by Samir Sabry, *Donia* and *Yalla Ya Shabab*.
- Channel 2 : *Tabeibak Al Khas*
- Channel 3 : *Sayedati Sadati* (twice).

Radio

- General program : *Ala El Nasia* by Amal Fahmi, *Shabab El Ghad* and *Rabbat El Beyout* (3 times).
- Cairo: Open period (twice each two-hour program), news (several times), *Saloon El Qahira El Kobra* (twice during each one hour program).
- Youth and Sport: Open period (twice each one hour program), news (twice).
- *Sout El Arab*: News
- *El Shark El Awsat*: Reports

Newspapers

- *Al Ahram* : 6 articles
- *Al Akbar* : 3 articles
- *Al Gomhoreya* and *Mahboubati*: 4 articles
- *Al Wafd*
- *Nahdet Masr*
- *Akhbar Al Arab* (Arabian Gulf Newspaper)
- *Horeyati* magazine
- *Al Shabab* Magazine: (twice)

Face- to-face communication

This activity included rallies conducted held at universities, secondary schools and NGOs. (see page 15).

Nine rallies were conducted at the universities and high institutes and were attended by 2554 students, both male and female. Three rallies were conducted at girls' secondary schools and were attended by 215 girls. Three rallies were conducted for 98 youth members of the Leo Clubs and Rotaract Clubs. The EFHS has also received requests to organize rallies in several universities and schools, including a preparatory school for girls.

During the rallies scientific information related to reproductive health issues was presented that was relevant to the audience's age group. Following the presentation there is an open period for questions from the audience. The hotline number and website address were announced during the rallies.

Promotional materials

Flyers, posters and calendars were developed as promotional materials. Wall calendars for the year 2005 were envisioned to keep the message fresh and visible for the entire year.

Various reliable advertising agents submitted message designs. The designs were tested among three groups of young people. The selected design was modified slightly according to the observations of the focus groups.

The printed materials were distributed to youth during the rallies in various governorates, on several university campuses, at the book fair, in sporting clubs and at many secondary schools. The counselors themselves distributed flyers in the Metro stations. The Ministry of Youth and Sports requested 300 posters for distribution to the youth centers in several governorates. UNICEF also helped distribute posters in their Qena and Assiut youth centers.

A computer mouse pad is currently being designed to advertise the hotline telephone number and website address. This is expected to be very cost effective and will ensure that the message will remain visible for a long time.

Soft Opening

The counselors started their duties and received their first calls on Saturday, December 4, 2004. These calls were the result of the mass media announcements, rallies, and the promotional materials distributed. At the beginning, counselors needed technical support and increased self-confidence. Support was forthcoming daily and soon their morale improved. Through guidance, reassurance and coaching they gained confidence, rapidly became familiar with the task and demonstrated remarkable performance.

Official Opening

The hotline was officially inaugurated on January 18, 2005 during a ceremony held in the Pyramiza Hotel, Cairo. The opening was held under the auspices of the ministers of health and population and youth and sports. Unforeseen circumstances curtailed their participation at the opening; Prof. Dr. Yehia El Hadidi and Dr. Safaa El Baz represented the MOHP minister and Dr. Mohamed Abdel Aal represented the minister of youth and sports.

The ceremony was attended by 124 people representing the Ministry of Health and Population, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Higher Education and Universities, the Ministry of Education, the media (television, radio and newspapers), various international organizations (UNICEF, WHO and Population Council) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The ceremony attracted wide publicity in all media channels and greatly helped to market the hotline and website.

Calls Received

Two reporting periods will be used to differentiate calls received during the "soft opening" period from December 4, 2004 through January 18, 2005, and those received after the official opening between January 18 and February 18, 2005.

Number of Calls

Table 1 Total number of calls and daily average

DATA	Dec 4 – Jan 18	Jan 19 –Feb 18	TOTAL
Total no. of calls	530	2170	2700
Average daily calls	11.5	70	35
No. of calls from females	304	1373	1677
% of total calls	57.4%	63.3%	62%
No. of calls from males	226	797	1023
% of total calls	42.6%	36.7%	38%
No. of prank calls	13	18	31
% of total calls	2.5%	0.8%	1.1%
Calls from 10 am - 4pm	257 (48.5%)	1056(48.7%)	1313(48.6%)
% of female calls	59%	61.5%	61%
% of male calls	41%	38.5%	39%
Calls from 4 pm – 10pm	273 (51.5%)	1114 (51%)	1387 (51.3%)
% of female calls	55.7%	65%	63%
% of male calls	44.3%	35%	37%

The following conclusions were drawn from these figures:

- Call traffic increased markedly after the official opening. This was principally due to intensive media activities. 182 calls were received on the day following the television program *Hatha Al Massa'a*. A third counselor was brought in to handle the high volume of calls.
- During the first two months, there was an average of 70 calls per day, although the target was only 60 calls per day. This higher than expected average reflects the actual need for the hotline and the acceptability of the service. Many callers reported that they knew about the hotline from their friends.
- The number of prank calls was unexpectedly low and has actually decreased since the official opening. This may be due to the professionalism of the hotline operators.
- Calls from female hotline users were more frequent (68%) than calls from male hotline users (32%).
- Calls received between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm were almost equal in number to those received between 4:00 pm and 10:00 pm. The higher female to male ratio was also consistent during both periods.

Source of Calls

Table 2 illustrates the number of calls made from the different governorates before and after the official opening and is arranged according to frequency of calls.

Table 2 Source of calls

Governorate	Number of calls		TOTAL
	December 4, 2004 – January 18, 2005	January 19 – February 18, 2005	
Cairo	345	1373	1718
Giza	65	321	386
Qualiobiya	30	117	147
Gharbia	10	47	57
Menoufiya	16	41	57
Sharqiya	10	40	50
Alexandria	2	42	44
Dakahliya	5	32	37
Beheira	8	13	21
Minia	3	17	20
Fayoum	7	12	19
Sohag	3	15	18
Beni Suef	4	14	18
Qena	4	12	16
Kafr El Sheikh	1	11	12
Ismailia	4	8	12
Suez	1	10	11
Port Said	6	5	11
Damiatt	1	6	7
Assiut	2	5	7
Aswan	-	7	7
Sharm El Sheikh	1	5	6
Red Sea	-	5	5
Luxor	-	5	5
Arish	-	2	2
Wadi El Gadeed	1	-	1
Abroad	1	5	6
	530	2170	2700

The following observations were made from studying these figures:

- Calls were received from all governorates of Egypt.
- Six calls were received from outside Egypt: 3 from England, one from France, one from Morocco and one from Algeria.
- As expected the main bulk of calls were made from Greater Cairo (63.6%) and Giza governorates (14.3%).

- ▶ This was expected due to population density in these two governorates and because phone calls are charged at the local rate.
- Calls from Qualiobiya were next in frequency (5.5%).
 - ▶ This proves the decision to avoid using a 900 number, which would charge the user a higher fee, was correct.
- Unexpectedly, there were not many calls from Alexandria (1.6%). Therefore it was decided to organize a rally at Alexandria University in March 2005 and to announce the hotline project on Channel 5 television.
- Minia Governorate also had an unexpectedly low number of calls (less than 0.8%).

Age of Callers

Table 3 Number of callers by age

Age group	Calls from females	Calls from males	Total no. of calls	Percentage of total calls
< 10 years	3	-	3	0.11 %
10 – 14 years	72	27	99	3.67 %
15 – 19 years	413	170	583	21.60%
20 – 25 years	396	246	642	23.77%
> 25 years	793	580	1373	50.85%
TOTAL	1677	1023	2700	100%

As expected half of the calls were made by youth under 25 years of age and the other half from those 25 years or older. Many of the older callers were parents discussing problems and concerns related to their daughters or sons. There were 99 calls from mothers (around 6% of the female callers) and 21 calls from fathers (about 2% of the male callers). A minimal number of calls were received from teachers enquiring about their students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Table 4 Questions and problems discussed with female callers (approximate figures in order of frequency-some calls covered multiple topics)

FAQs by Female Callers	Percentage of calls
Nutrition and weight problems	12%
Gen. medical problems	10%
Fertility and pregnancy	10%
Social problems	10%
Psychiatric problems	9.5%

FAQs by Female Callers	Percentage of calls
Irregular menstruation	9.5%
The hymen	5.8%
Marital relations	5.4%
Vaginal discharge	5%
Hair problems	4.6%
Puberty	3.5%
Breasts	2.7%
Contraception	2.6%
Acne	2.5%
Masturbation	2.4%
Dysmenorrhoea	2.2%
Genital organs	1.7%
Questions about males	1.4%
Female genital cutting	1.2%
Premarital counseling	1%
Drug abuse	1%
STDs	0.25%
Personal hygiene	0.25%
Unclassified	1.6%

Table 5 Questions and problems discussed with male callers (approximate figures in order of frequency-some calls covered multiple topics)

FAQs by Male Callers	Percentage of calls
Marital relations	20.3%
Genital organs	17.2%
Masturbation	16.1%
General medical problems	15.7%
Psychiatric problems	5.7%
Fertility and pregnancy	5.5%
Social problems	3.3%
Questions about females	3.2%
Unclassified	2.4%

FAQs by Male Callers	Percentage of calls
Nutrition and weight problems	2.4%
Hymen	2.2%
Drug abuse	2.2%
Premarital counseling	1.1%
Acne	1%
Female genital cutting	1%
Puberty	0.9%
STDs	0.8%
Contraception	0.5%
Hair problems	0.4%
Breasts	0.4%

Duration of Calls

Table 6 Average duration of calls

	During soft opening	After official opening
Duration when counseling female callers	3 minutes	7 minutes 40 seconds
Duration when counseling male callers	2 minutes 30 seconds	8 minutes 10 seconds

Referrals

Referrals were made in 410 cases or 15% of the calls. Referrals were made for the following reasons:

- Second opinions: these calls were referred to the Project Manager who allocated two evenings to respond to these calls (21 calls)
- Prescriptions or examinations: callers from Cairo and Giza were referred to the Project Manager's clinic on Sundays and Wednesdays free of charge (6 cases)
- Other hotlines
- Specialized clinics mainly psychiatry, general medicine and dermatology
- Laboratory tests such as hemoglobin or blood sugar examinations.

Social problems were discussed to the greatest extent possible. Callers were then advised to seek social counseling from parents, teachers or social workers.

A network of referral centers in all governorates is currently being developed by EFHS. Links to governmental services and other NGOs is the main priority. So far, the following links have been negotiated:

- The youth clinics affiliated to the Egyptian Family Planning Association in Qualiobiya, Menoufiya, Ismailia and Dakahliya.
- The EFHS is working with the MOHP Population Sector and the Institute for Teaching Hospitals to establish nine youth counseling centers in the teaching hospitals in Cairo (4), Benha, Shebin El Kom, Damanshour, Sohag and Aswan.
- Negotiations are underway with the Ain Shams University Psychiatric Center to establish a weekly youth psychiatric counseling clinic that functions as a referral center for the hotline
- The possibility of establishing an "Adolescent Clinic" at the OB/GYN Department of Zagazig University is being discussed
- Some private physicians in Luxor, Menoufia, Port Said and Cairo expressed their willingness to cooperate and accept referrals for a reduced fee between LE 5-10. This may be instituted at a later stage.

Monitoring of Performance

Hotline progress and the counselors' performance are reviewed on daily, weekly and monthly bases. The administrator and the supervisor are constantly present during working hours and provide assistance and support to the counselors. The project manager provides technical support and supervises the quality of the responses to incoming calls and the attitude and performance of the counselors.

A monthly scientific meeting is held at the Hotline's office to discuss observations made by the counselors and supervisor and to address frequently asked topics.

A series of scientific sessions to learn about and discuss frequently asked issues related to psychiatry, sociology, general medicine and dermatology will be held. The session on March 4, 2005 was devoted to psychiatry.

The rate and relation of incoming calls to various promotional activities are measured regularly to assess the impact of these activities. This is essential for the evaluation and modification of the marketing plan.

Website Design and Creation

A contest to select the website name was announced by email and sent to more than 70,000 addresses. More than 100 responses were received but no attractive or appealing suggestions were received.

The Media Committee suggested the name shababna.org. It was tested with two groups of young people and found to be appealing and attractive. An Arabic name, *Sehetak ya Shabab*, was also suggested to help with promotional activities.

A preliminary website design was uploaded to the Internet. The scientific data contained in the website includes the contents of the books produced by TAHSEEN/CATALYST. There were 23 website hits in December 2004, 3621 in January 2005, 4149 in February 2005 and 6859 in March 2005. The total number of

hits was 14,652 between December 2004-March 2005. Most of the users were from Egypt and there were visitors from Japan, United Kingdom, USA and Saudi Arabia.

The website is currently being modified and revised and is expected to be finalized in April 2005.

Annex A EFHS Youth Hotline Marketing Plan (December 2004)

Marketing Strategy

The following strategies will be adopted in order to promote the use of the hotline:

- Utilization of the most cost-effective means in order to reach the target population of young people and their families.
- Adapt the marketing techniques to the characteristics of Egyptian youth.
- Direct contact with youth will be emphasized wherever they are gathered.
- Participation of youth in the planning and implementation of marketing activities.
- Efforts will be made to gain support of community leaders, parents and mass media.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of marketing activities so as to ensure maximum impact and modify plans according to feedback.
- Cooperation with the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of High Education, Ministry of Education, local authorities at Governorate level and local NGOs will be essential.
- Marketing activities would be an ongoing process during the implementation of the project.

Marketing Approaches

- Promotional messages and materials would be delivered to the target population either directly or indirectly.
- The indirect messages are intended to create demand for service and gain adequate parental and community support. This will be mainly implemented through unpaid media programs or through peer groups.
- The direct messages would be delivered directly to the youth population and would indicate the hotline telephone number and location of the website.

Marketing Activities

Indirect Activities

These activities have already been started. Several articles and programs in the press, radio and television have announced the intention to launch the project and emphasized its urgent need and benefits. Indirect activities will continue and EFHS will try to establish regular columns or programs in selected media addressing young people.

- TV : Channels 1, 2 and 3
- Radio: Greater Cairo station, youth and sports station and main station.

- Press: *Al Ahram*, *Al Gomhoreya* and *Al Wafd* newspapers and *Horeyati* magazine.

A contest to select a website name has already been announced and distributed to about 70,000 e mail addresses.

Direct Activities

These activities will be started during the second half of December, as close as possible to the availability of service. The following communication channels will be utilized:

Newspaper Advertisements

These will be used on a limited basis. Young people do not read newspapers regularly except when they are looking for jobs. *Al Ahram* newspaper is the most widely distributed and read newspaper. An ad box will be placed and the response measured. This can be repeated if responses are good. The Youth Magazine targets youth and an advertisement will be placed. *Al Waseet* is a possible printed material that is free of charge and well distributed.

Radio

The most popular radio station heard by young people is the Nile 104.2 FM station. A deal is currently being negotiated with them and we are trying to allocate one of their programs for information and dialogue related to reproductive health.

Posters

Posters have the advantage of being kept in place for a long time and can be seen by many young people if strategically placed. We shall negotiate with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to place these posters via the broad distribution network of the governorate youth centers. We shall also try to get permission for placing these posters in universities and secondary schools. We will either negotiate this centrally with the ministers or locally with the governors. Sporting clubs will also be a suitable place for posters.

Flyers

This inexpensive material can be handed directly to the targeted youth. However, many people discard flyers quickly. Therefore, we are planning to print the 2005 calendar on one face and the intended message on the other face. Another possibility is to print the hotline information on one side and a photo of famous soccer players on the other side of flyers to be distributed to youth during football matches.

Flyers will be distributed to university students, secondary school students, youth attending sporting clubs and at the fast food chains. The legal aspect of such distribution is currently being examined in order to obtain the necessary permissions.

Other Promotional Materials

Because the Hotline will start functioning at the beginning of a new year, wall calendars for the year 2005 with promotional message printed on its face will be printed and distributed to selected persons and places. This will ensure that the

message will be displayed for 365 days and will be seen by a large number youth and their parents.

Cooperation with other NGOs

It has been decided that the Leo and Rotaract clubs will join EFHS in their efforts to promote the Hotline. These two clubs represent the youth components of the Lions and Rotary clubs (respectively). Members of these clubs are young people with marked leadership characters. The clubs have branches in many governorates. They are willing to promote the use of the hotlines among their members who would also act as promoters in universities and schools. Further negotiations are on the way and are expected to result in other ideas.

Rallies

This is a very important activity and is expected to spread the message to a large number of youth and motivate them to seek counseling and information. Rallies will be conducted in various faculties of different universities around the country. It might also be conducted in selected secondary schools, in the sporting clubs or youth centers. EFHS has extensive experience organizing such activities. We will recruit and train two students from each university to help organize the rallies, act as peer educators and accept feedback from their peers.

Rallies Conducted

Table 7 Rallies Conducted between November 6 - December 21, 2004

Date	Governorate	Place	Audience	
			Sex	No.
Nov 6	Cairo	Leo	Mixed	32
Nov 24	Cairo	Rotaract	Mixed	29
Nov 29	Alex	Leo	Mixed	37
Dec 4	Ismailia	University	Mixed	207
Dec 5	Port Said	Faculty of Commerce	Mixed	85
Dec 7	Beni Suef	Faculty of Education	Mixed	412
Dec 8	Cairo	Abdeen Secondary School	Girls	98
Dec 9	Luxor	Institute of Tourism	Mixed	342
Dec 11	Aswan	Faculty of Social Service	Mixed	564
Dec 12	Cairo	Sadat Academy	Mixed	121
Dec 13	Fayoum	Faculty of Social Service	Mixed	523
Dec 14	Giza	Madinah Academy	Boys	120
Dec 18	Menoufiya	Faculty of Arts	Girls	180
Dec 21	Cairo	Lycee Secondary School	Girls	62
Dec 21	Cairo	Howaiati Secondary School	Girls	55
			Total	2867